

CLAIMS:

1. An image processing system for producing clusters for related objects for subsequent analysis comprising, means for supplying a multi-level digital representation of the image, means for identifying
5 predetermined objects in the image and supplying data defining their locations, means for deriving boundary data from the multi-level digital representation, the boundary data representing boundaries between different regions of
10 the image, means for clustering the predetermined objects into groups in dependence on their proximity to each other and in dependence on the boundary data, and means for supplying data relating to the groups for subsequent analysis.

15 2. An image processing system according to claim 1 in which the boundary data is derived from another representation of the image.

20 3. An image processing system according to claim 1 in which the boundary data is derived from a separate source containing data relating to the image.

4. An image processing system according to claim 1 in which the boundary data is derived from background data from the multi-level digital representation.

25 5. An image processing system according to claim 4 in which the background data is colour data.

6. An image processing system according to claim 4 in which the background data is greyscale data.

7. An image processing system according to any preceding claim in which the means for clustering objects

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together clusters objects which are separated by less than a predetermined limit.

8. An image processing system according to any preceding claim in which the means for clustering objects together clusters objects which are not separated by any boundary defined by the boundary data.

9. A method for processing images for producing clusters of related objects for subsequent analysis comprising the steps of, supplying a multi-level digital representation of the image, identifying predetermined objects in the image, supplying data defining the locations of the predetermined objects, deriving boundary data from the multi-level digital representation, the boundary data representing boundaries between regions of the original image, and clustering the predetermined objects into groups in dependence on their proximity to each other and in dependence on the boundary data.

10. A method according to claim 9 in which the boundary data is derived from another representation of the image.

11. A method according to claim 9 in which the boundary data is derived from a separate source containing data relating to the image.

12. A method according to claim 7 in which the boundary data is derived from background data in the multi-level digital representation.

13. A method according to claim 12 in which the background data is colour data.

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14. A method according to claim 12 in which the background data is greyscale data.

15. A method according to any of claims 10 to 14 in which the step of clustering objects together clusters
5 objects separated by less than a predetermined limit.

16. A method according to any of claims 10 to 15 in which the step of clustering objects together clusters objects which are not separated by any boundary defined by the boundary data.

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